began— an arsenal that "would have been enough to exter-
minate all life on the earth," Gorbachev said. According to Gorbachev, a recent poll in Russia found that about half of the people believed that perestroika was necessary, where just 10 years ago, when the Soviet Union collapsed, 45 percent of the people opposed it. In Moscow, a young reporter asked Gorbachev if perestroika was a success or a failure. "I said to her, it is my strong conviction that perestroika triumphed, but it was interrupted," Gorbachev said. "Perestroika did the most important thing: it brought people to the point where they could begin turning back the clock." But Russia has been slowly transitioning towards democ-
racy since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev remains confident it will be successful. "You built your demo-
cratic system over 200 years and you want us to build it into a democracy in 200 days," Gorbachev said. "Well, that cannot be done—only God can create in seven days." According to Frank Rusciano, professor of politi-
cal science at Rider University, when Gorbachev started per-
estrika and glasnost [political openness], he didn’t do so assuming the USSR would col-
lapse. "What happened is that when it opened up, the Soviets’ hold on nations in the eastern bloc started to disappear," Rusciano said. When Boris Yeltsin became president, he replaced reform with what Gorbachev refers to as 'shock therapy.' "When I speak in Europe, I say ‘cowboy methods,’ Gorbachev said. "But then I understand that in America, one has to be more cautious because cowboys are good people." Although he didn’t identify President Bush directly, the crit-
icism of Bush, who has a reputa-
tion as a foreign policy “cow-
boy,” seemed to be implied. "The question is, will it be leadership through domination, through hegemony, through imposing your will on other nations?" Gorbachev asked the audience. "Or will it be leadership through partnership?" Gorbachev said too often we solve things by force, that world leaders too often adopt a "might makes right" policy. "They underestimate the powers of persuasion; they underestimate the society, the whole world—including many people in this country and around the world who protest the war in Iraq," Gorbachev said. "There is a lot of talk of humanitarian intervention. You should not equate humanitarian intervention and use of force." Senior Yekaterina Mayants, met Gorbachev after the pre-
sentation. In Russian, she yelled, "Thank you, you are the reason why I am here!" He turned and said, "This is why I feel good about perestroika." According to Mayants, Gorbachev’s longtime translator translated criticisms incorrectly. When Gorbachev said, "Your president keeps butting with the same problem," he actually said: ‘Your president keeps stepping on a rake and hitting himself in the head —from the impact, he forgets what happened and does the same thing again.’ In response to the people nodding off during the pre-
sentation, which lasted longer than scheduled, Mayants said it’s very disrespectful to a Russian man. "This man may have saved the world from a nuclear war and you have the nerve to fall asleep as he is speak-
ing?" Mayants said. "Only in America." Mayants has a unique respect for Gorbachev, since his perestroika opened the doors for her to come to America and gave her a new lease on life, since the Chernobyl nuclear disaster happened only 45 miles from her city in Russia. "I feared getting sick, like most of my friends," Mayants said. "To see the man who prac-
tically gave me a second chance; who gave me a chance at a full, healthy life, a college education and endless opportunities—it was very emotional." Gorbachev ended the lun-
cheon with closing remarks about the agenda of the cur-
tent president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, who has begun recentral-
izing power in the former superpower. "I hope the second term of Putin will be used to start a broad-based movement to spread technology and raise the standard of living in Russia, to apply and implement Information-Technologies," Gorbachev said. Similarly, Rusciano warned of Putin: "Putin is starting to move backwords," Rusciano said. "He’s a former KGB officer — I don’t think he’s been doing much since then—he’s someone to be watched."